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ABSTRACT

Project TRAIN (Training and Reinforcement to Answer Individual Needs) is an inservice training program collaboratively conducted by the University of Hartford and the Hartford Public School System. The project serves a large innercity elementary school populated principally by low income Spanish speaking and black students. The immediate objective of the project is to train/retrain urban teachers, interns, and paraprofessionals to more effectively meet the individual needs of multiethnic pupils and parents of low income families. An important component of the program is parental involvement and adult education courses provided by the participating school and university personnel. (JD)

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PROJECT TRAIN

TEACHER CORPS CYCLE X

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS / UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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SUMMARY

Project TRAIN (Training and Reinforcement to Answer Individual Needs) is an inservice training program collaboratively conducted by the University of Hartford and the Hartford School System within the two-year span (1975-77) of Teacher Corps Cycle X. The project serves a large inner-city elementary school populated principally by Spanish-speaking and black students. Three neighboring schools with similar needs serve as satellites. School selection was based on a city-wide assessment of staff training needs.

The main goal of the project is to operationalize current concepts in teacher education into an effective staff development model. It contains a variety of coordinated but independent elements adaptable to several circumstances. The model developed and implemented during the course of the project includes the following elements:

Monday & Tuesday	- content courses (on site)
Wednesday	- team-based seminars (on site)
Thursday	- enrichment series (on site)
Friday & Saturday	- network workshops (regional sites)

Community components of the program are 1) a Parent Education Program (PEP), providing a wide range of parent education courses taught by target school and university staff, and 2) a Community Council, offering opportunities for parity policy-making and single-session offerings. The various programmatic building blocks are designed to provide teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents with the competence and confidence to share information, insights and skills in promoting the growth of self and students.

Project staff includes Co-Directors representing the University and the school system, respectively. They have separate Teacher Corps budgets which are coordinated together and with several other institutional resources. An evaluator and a documentor provide complementary views of project processes and products which are disseminated internally and externally on a regular basis.

COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION

A. Description and Development - Project TRAIN, a staff development program, is co-sponsored by the University of Hartford and the Hartford Board of Education under a two-year grant from Teacher Corps. The project provides comprehensive inservice training opportunities on site for teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents at the Kinsella Elementary School. Staff members of three adjacent satellite schools participate in these training activities as space permits. Other school system personnel receive "spillover" benefits in terms of large-group presentations, dissemination, and demonstration activities.

Project TRAIN was collaboratively developed by University and School System leadership with the support of the Kinsella community and the State Education Department. The steps undertaken in the developmental/implementation process were as follows:

Fall-Spring 1974 - comprehensive needs assessment of the school system, revealing staff retraining to be a significant need with respect to seven priority areas (e.g., individualizing instruction, mainstreaming, multicultural education, basic skills, parent involvement)

Fall 1975 - selection of the Kinsella School by a joint University-City planning team as the demonstration site based on ethnic, economic, and educational criteria

Spring 1975 - development of a successful proposal by the expanded joint planning team based on student test results, staff surveys, and parent meetings

Summer 1975 - interdisciplinary brainstorming session by subject-matter and administrative specialists; orientation and planning sessions for target school staff; and a community-based course for experienced staff and inexperienced interns resulting in a slide-tape sequence of several agencies within the Kinsella community

The initial steps in the implementation process led to a smorgasboard series of course offerings during the first academic year (1975-76), including: Multicultural Approaches to Education, Instructional Management, Prescriptive-Diagnostic Techniques for Teaching Reading, Children's Literature for Inner-City Children, and Open Education Practices. Individual workshops in such areas as Individualization of Reading,

Bilingual Special Education, and Classroom Puppetry were also conducted. During the intervening Summer of 1976, intensive institutes with a clinical emphasis were implemented in the following areas: Mainstreaming, Criterion-Referenced Assessment, Mathematics & Metric Education, and the Words-in-Color Approach to Teaching Reading.

In order to achieve a more focused and replicable model of inservice education, the following modular mix was developed for the current year (1976-77) based on collaborative school staff-University faculty planning:

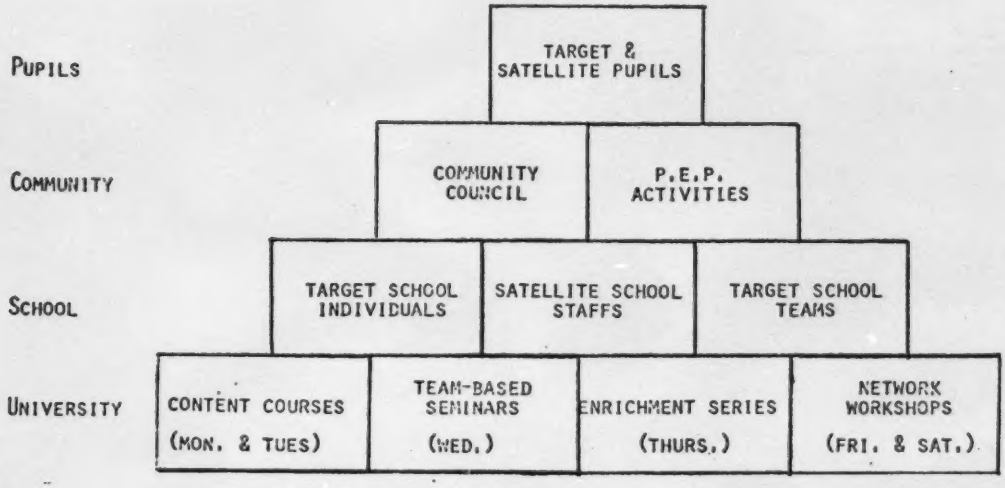
Mon. & Tues	- content courses	- wide range of specialized offerings geared to the needs of individual teachers and paraprofessionals
Wednesday	- team-based seminars	- interactive parallel sections customized to clusters of staff by faculty facilitators
Thursday	- enrichment series	- large-group presentations, small-group sharing sessions, and individual visitations
Fri. & Sat.	- network workshops	- functionally specific training activities for several projects across the region

The central component is the team-based seminars offered to staff clusters by faculty facilitators who are skilled in group interaction, instructional management, and clinical supervision. Content courses provide these teams and other interested staff members with specialized skills needed to advance their instructional objectives. An enrichment series is conducted twice monthly on an early-dismissal basis to provide the full staff with exposure to key speakers, opportunities for sharing, and scheduling of visitations to other schools. Network activities based on such common concerns as community involvement and exceptional children are conducted at least once per month. Virtually all activities carry a University and/or Board credit option, providing career mobility for paraprofessionals and salary schedule recognition for teachers.

Intertwined with the training program for staff is a Parent Education Program (PEP), offering a wide range of minicourses during and after the school day in such diverse topics as high school equivalency, sewing, consumer education, woodcarving, slimnastics, and helping children learn to read. A Community Council, established on a parity basis between parents and staff, serves as a forum for single-session PEP

activities (e.g., Jesse Jackson, fire safety, food stamps, plant growing, Toy Library) and continuous policy-making feedback. Thus, the evolving experience of the project has culminated in an operable model whose components translate a range of current concepts in teacher education into replicable reality.

In summary, the building block model of Project TRAIN can be illustrated as follows:



B. Objectives and Goals - The immediate objective of the project is to train/retrain urban teachers, interns, and paraprofessionals in a target school to more effectively meet the individual needs of multi-ethnic pupils and parents of low-income families. The ultimate goal is to demonstrate a field-based "training complex" model, consisting of coordinated but autonomous elements adaptable to the circumstances of other schools and systems.

The guiding principles used in moving from theory to practice with respect to these goals are as follows:

- providing all offerings on site and during or directly after the school day
- incorporating clinically- and community-based components wherever practicable
- offering a range of delivery formats including seminars, large-group presentations, competency-based modules and peer teaching
- emphasizing responsiveness to staff needs, direction, and participation

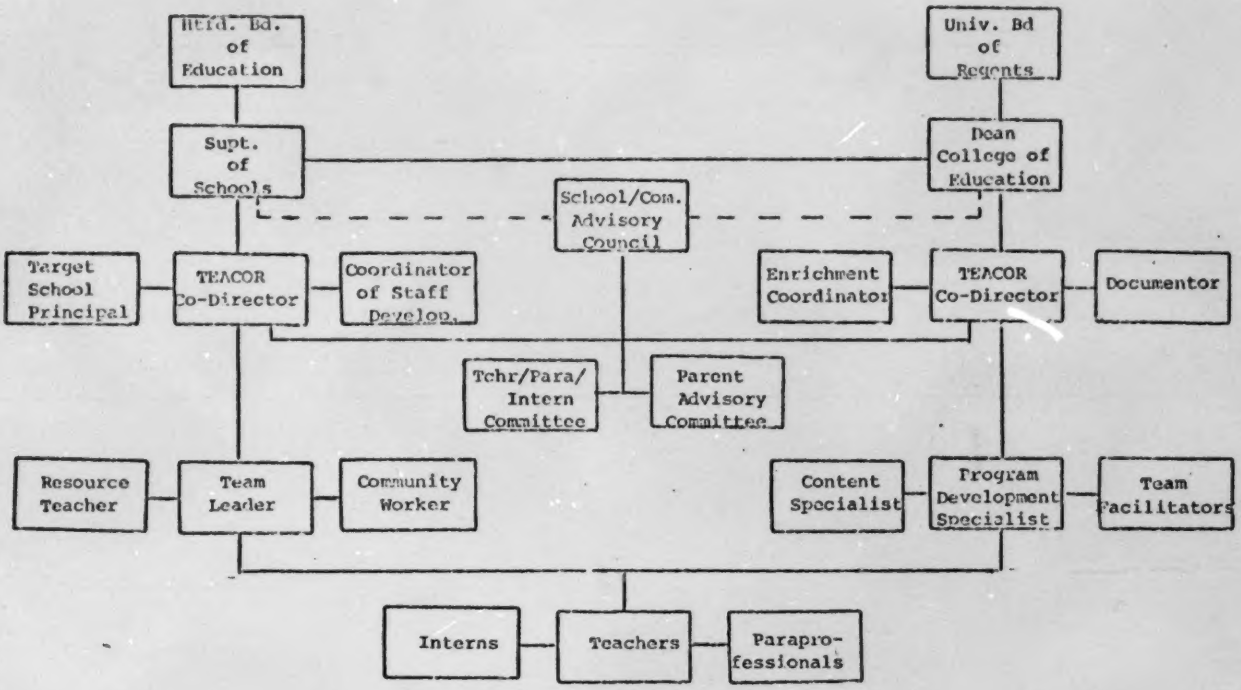
- integrating training for inexperienced interns into that of experienced staff
- utilizing university, school system, and community training resources with a focus on actual competence rather than formal credentials
- enhancing interests and capabilities in meeting the needs of multicultural and exceptional children
- establishing linkages with local, network, and state education agencies
- providing collaboration on a parity basis between university, school, and community

C. Personnel Involved - Based on the parity collaboration principle, the project has two Co-Directors, representing the university and school system community, respectively. The two Co-Directors work in close complementarity with each other and with key personnel in the respective institutions.

Personnel were selected and structured so as to be integrated in the existing organizational system. The university Co-Director, for example, also serves as Co-Chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education. Regular University faculty are used exclusively to serve as facilitators for the team-based seminars. Similarly, the Enrichment Series Coordinator is the Chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education. School system personnel, particularly from the participating schools, are used along with university faculty for the content courses and PEP offerings.

New roles which are being piloted in the program include 1) a resource teacher, who was selected from the school system to provide a full-time link for the clinical support system of the project; and 2) a project documentor, a part-time graduate assistant whose responsibilities focus on data collection, internal feedback, and dissemination.

The organizational structure is summarized on the top of the following page.



D. Budget - The University's Teacher Corps budget, prorated for an academic year, is summarized in the following broad category totals:

Administration	$ 32,000
Instruction	44,000
Staff Fringe Benefits	11,400
Travel	3,300
Indirect Costs	7,200
TOTAL	$ 97,900

This budget is expended on a coordinated basis with University funds and parallels school system budgets so as to maximize cost-sharing.

E. Contribution to Teacher Education - The contribution of the project lies in giving practicable meaning to current concepts in teacher education rather than in creating new catchwords. By translating these concepts into operable reality, their feasibility is demonstrated, evaluated, documented and disseminated. The model allows for the modular components' coordination and customization locally as well as for

their individual adaptability and replicability to other circumstances.

The participation of the members of the target and satellite school staffs has been exceedingly high. The leadership of the local teacher organizations have praised the program, asking for its expansion to other schools in the system. Local groups, like the Title I Advisory Council and the Board of Education, are actively exploring adoption of the model. Several sections of the project's field-based training complex model have been incorporated into the expanding inservice efforts of the College of Education.

F. Evaluation Methods and Results - The project is evaluated by an independent contractor on a comprehensive basis. The design provides for illuminative evaluation, active feedback, and summative analysis extending to pupil outcomes. The evaluator is complemented in his role by a project documentor, an internal role which facilitates the demonstration-dissemination process. Both the evaluator and documentor have reported positive findings.

Local dissemination activities include a monthly newsletter, which serves as a forum for sharing effective teaching practices, and a biweekly bulletin, which reports project development to interested parties. Regional dissemination activities center on network presentation sessions. National dissemination activities include presentations at the National Teacher Centering Conference, the Annual AACTE Meeting, the National Teacher Corps Conference, and the ATE Convention. Journal articles in national teacher education periodicals are also currently in progress.

So that others may benefit from the results of this evolving experience, it is suggested that Project TRAIN is on track for an AACTE Distinguished Achievement Award.